

DISCRIMINATION

Throughout the early 20th Century, African American soldiers faced harsh treatment, racial slurs, and unfair treatment, particularly in the Jim Crow South.

Questions of equality and citizenship arose when African Americans were sent off to training camps in preparation for war. Tensions culminated on August 23, 1917, in Houston, Texas, where disputes led to an all-out riot. African American soldiers seized their rifles and went on a rampage in the city.

In the fall of that same year, the 15th Infantry of the New York National Guard moved to Camp Wadsworth in Spartanburg, South Carolina, but they were not welcomed by local citizens, who feared the incidents in Houston. Racial tensions continued to escalate until Colonel Hayward and Secretary of War Newton Baker decided to remove the 15th from the South and send them to France.

Discrimination towards the 15th and African American soldiers did not end with the war. When the soldiers returned home, they had difficulties acquiring jobs or proper healthcare, despite the attention they received from their efforts in France.

FEAR NEGRO TROOPS IN SPARTANBURG

Citizens Make Protest When It Is Reported That Fifteenth Infantry Will Be Trained There.

POINT TO HOUSTON TROUBLE

War Department Denies That Negro Regiment Has Been Assigned to Spartanburg Camp.

Special to The New York Times.

CAMP WADSWORTH, SPARTANBURG, S. C., Aug. 30.—Following the receipt of a report that the Government intended to alter its original plan and include the Fifteenth Infantry, colored, in the troops to be trained at the camp here, the City of Spartanburg officially protested to the War Department against the sending of these troops, on the ground that trouble might result. The Fifteenth refused to accept the limited liberties accorded to the city's colored population. Mayor J. F. Floyd, in his protest, called attention to the recent outbreak of negro troops at Houston, Texas.

That Colonel William B. Hayward's organization, one of the first of the city's regiments to reach its war strength, is unwelcome here is evident from the comments heard in the streets. The whites here are outspoken in their opposition to the plan and predict trouble if the War Department fails to heed the protest.

"I was sorry to learn that the Fifteenth Regiment has been ordered here," said Mayor Floyd tonight, "for, with their Northern ideas about race equality, they will probably expect to be treated like white men. I can say right here that they will not be treated as anything except negroes. We shall treat them exactly as we treat our resident negroes. This thing is like waving a red flag in the face of a bull, something that can't be done without trouble. We have asked Congressman Nicholls to request the War Department not to send the soldiers here. You remember the trouble a couple of weeks ago at Houston."

Chamber of Commerce Objects.

The New York Times, August 31, 1917.

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